

REMARKS

In the application claims 1-16 remain pending and presently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Stibel (U.S. Patent No. 7,089,236). The reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 can be maintained only if *each and every element* as set forth in a claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in the reference being relied upon. Thus, to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102, *the identical invention* must be shown in as complete detail in the reference being relied upon as is contained in the claim being considered.

Considering now Stibel, Stibel discloses a system that processes a user query to generate a new search query that will more effectively *retrieve information from a database*. (see Abstract). To this end, Stibel describes a system in which a user interface (shown in Fig. 1) is provided for collecting a user query. The user query is then provided to a query engine which accesses information in a knowledge database and a profile database in an attempt to *locate a list of meanings for the user query*. If the query engine is unable to locate any meanings for the user query, the user is prompted to enter a meaning to be associated with the user query which meaning is then stored *in the user profile database* for use in subsequent searches. (see Col. 5, line 57-Col. 6, line 24; Col. 11, lines 43-45).

After a meaning for the user query has been obtained from the user (i.e., the user is presented with possible meanings for selection or a meaning is provided by the user), the query engine of Stibel then functions to identify a set of words that are related to the meaning. The query engine then employs the related words and the user query to create an "expanded query," i.e., a search request that is represented as a boolean, or other logical, search strategy, that will more accurately retrieve information from a search engine, i.e., a database, about a topic of interest. (see Col. 6, lines 24-33; Col 3, lines 1-7). The "expanded

query” is then presented to a splitter (Fig. 7) and the splitter functions to provide the “expanded query” with a URL format that is appropriate for one or more search engines, e.g., yahoo.com, to which the “expanded query” is to be provided. (see Col. 6, lines 34-37; Col. 13, lines 63-67). The search results that are returned from the search engine(s) as a result of receiving the properly formatted “expanded query” are merged together and an output HTML page is presented to the user. (see Col. 14, lines 3-9).

From the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Stibel fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the exact invention claimed as is required to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103. For example, it is respectfully submitted that Stibel does not disclose, teach, or suggest the claimed aspect of determining if an electronic database contains information for a product and, *when not*, automatically sending an electronic request to a *sourcing agent* to perform a search outside of the electronic database to gather information for the product. Rather, Stibel only discloses determining if a meaning for a user query is within a database and, when not, *prompting a user to provide the missing meaning* to thereby allow the search to be performed, which it is respectfully noted is not the invention claimed. Additionally, while Stibel discloses updating a main database *using information from a user's personalized database* (e.g., Col. 11, lines 43-45), it is respectfully submitted that this is not the same as the claimed aspect of updating a database *with product information* that is gathered by a sourcing agent. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of the claims based upon Stibel must be withdrawn.

It is additionally respectfully submitted that the act of generating for the user a linguistic database which is representative of key phrases and associated meanings (Col. 3, lines 45-54) is not the same or similar to the claimed aspect of providing a request for quotation or RFQ to a sourcing agent. In particular, those of ordinary skill in the art know that an RFQ is “a request sent by a buyer to one or more sellers for the pricing and

availability of a defined quantity of specific items." Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter set forth in claims 2 and 3 is allowable over Stibel.

Yet further, it is respectfully submitted that Fig. 1 of Stibel does not disclose, teach, or suggest using a set of predetermined rules to determine the sourcing agent to which an electronic request is to be automatically routed. Rather, Fig. 1 of Stibel depicts a method for allowing a user to develop a search query, i.e., to provide a meaning for a search query. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter set forth in claim 5 is allowable over Stibel.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that the application is in good and proper form for allowance. Such action on the part of the Examiner is respectfully requested.

Should it be determined, however, that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is respectfully urged to contact the attorney undersigned.

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Respectfully Submitted;



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